Allandale Neighbor

February 2009
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Allandale Village – Our Neighborhood Shopping Center

Tom Linehan

My memory of the stores that have come and gone in Allandale Village over the last 25 years is sparse. H-E-B has always been there. I remember a number of restaurants in the spot where Hangtown Grill now is, including Romeo's, an Asian buffet restaurant, and, more recently, Dry Dock. These, of course, all came after the long-standing Pancho's Mexican Buffet, which closed in the early 1980s. I miss the Radio Shack that moved out about a year or so ago. I remember getting haircuts at a barbershop on the side of the Allandale Village that faces Northland Drive. I was told the barbershop was originally on the front side of the shopping center facing Burnet Rd., but I don't remember the name of the place. (It pre-dated Supercuts.)

According to Robert Knight, partial owner and property manager of Allandale Village, a number of small independent businesses have been a part of the shopping center since the late 1940s, when it was first built. Five buddies originally purchased Allandale Village as an investment, and Robert's dad was one of them. All 5 of those friends lived and raised their families in Austin. They have since died, but Allandale Village remains an investment for their offspring. Robert became manager when his dad died in the 1970s. Managing Allandale Village is part of he and his son Jamie's business, Knight Real Estate. Their office is downtown in an old house just across from the Austin Convention Center.

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Membership Meter

Goal: 600 Members Current number of Members: 165

Become paying member. See back page for more information.

The article "What You Get for $15 a Year" (page 14), lists ANA's 2008 efforts.

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Have you renewed your membership?

The next ANA EC Meeting is on February 26, 2009.

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ANA General Meetings are held March and September on the fourth Thursday. The Executive Committee meets at 6:30 p.m. at the Yarborough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive, on the fourth Thursday every month. Meetings are open to the public.

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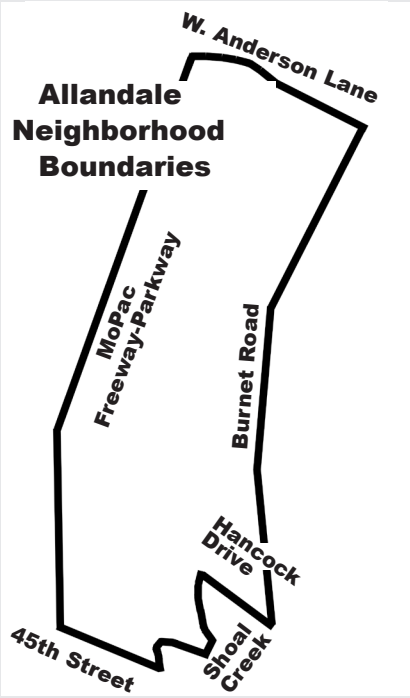

ANA's President's Letter – The Memorial Day Flood

Allan McMurtry

The Allandale Neighbor *will begin to revisit the Memorial Day flood of May 24, 1981, in upcoming issues.*

The Balcones Escarpment, rising less than one mile west of us, has been the catalyst of a number of immense rain events. The largest recorded 24-hour rainfall in the continental US occurred in Texas. The largest recorded from the beginning of record keeping to 1979 was the 1921 35" rain at Thrall, Texas, located NE of Austin about 41 miles. It was superseded in July of 1979 by a 43" rainfall at Alvin, Texas, 10 miles south of Houston.

Other rainfall events along the Balcones, where micro geography funnels huge rainfalls into small creeks, saw river flows of 967,000 cfs (cubic feet per second) on the Pecos River at US 290 in 1954, 647,000 cfs on the Little River at Cameron in 1921, and 281,000 cfs on the Medina River at Pipe Creek in 1978. Compare this flow to the Mississippi River at 620,000 cfs and you get a feel for the potential energy coming down these watersheds.

The weather service in Austin had issued over 6 flash flood warnings for Austin during the day and afternoon of May 24th, 1981. Low-pressure systems had a nasty habit of parking themselves over the Balcones Escarpment and throwing moisture engorged air up the slope, condensing at higher altitudes, and emptying themselves in small areas below. It was to be no different that day.

That night, amid the black of the moisture-laden sky laying on the city, the heavens above Austin opened up. The rain crashed into central Austin and particularly into the central northwest portion of Austin about 7:30 p.m., dropping 15" of rain in about 2 hours. The sides of the Balcones just west of Allandale became waves of water smashing down from Northwest Hills into the limited valley of Shoal Creek. Trees, torn from the soil, clogged the bridges at Steck, then Silverway, then Greenlawn, Shoal Creek Blvd, White Rock, over Northland Drive, and hurtling down toward Town Lake.

The thunder of Shoal Creek by 9:30 p.m. at night dwarfed the noise of freight trains passing on MoPac. The only thing that blunted the sound of Shoal Creek was the noise of the rain coming down on roofs. Mesas became marshes, yards became rivers, and creeks became coursing seas of deadly intent.

Along with the rain came the destruction, of lives, property, and peace of mind. Many of you may not know the personal stories of that time, the heroes, the survivors, and the stunned observers. Amid the wreckage of people's lives, your neighbors, present and past, made a difference, that night, the next day, and for months and years afterwards.

We will be telling their stories, as we know them. If you would, please let us know your stories from that night. It's a history we do not want to forget or allow to be passed over. As the stories come in, we will give them voice. As the pictures come in, we will give them light.

Please email your stories and/or photos to a*llandalereporter@yahoo.com* or mail them to: Allandale Neighbor, P.O. Box 10886, Austin, Texas 78766-1886. ❖

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Allandale Village

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Robert gave me an old photo of the center to scan for this article, which he estimates was taken in the late 1950s. I compared it with a couple of older photos of the center taken by Neal Douglas, a photographer for the Austin American-Statesman back in the 1940s and 1950s. Neal Douglas's photos are part of The Portal to Texas History, which is hosted and maintained by The University of North Texas Libraries *(http://texashistory.unt.edu/)*. The big difference between the photo you see in this article and one taken in 1951 is the Allandale Department Store seen in the older photo, which was located where the White's Store is in the more recent photo. There is no telling how long the Allandale Department Store lasted. A photo taken in 1954 shows a Mosely's Cafeteria where Hangtown now stands, and, next to that, a Ben Franklin dime store.

According to Robert, at the time Allandale Village was built it was only one of three suburban shopping centers in Austin. The other two were the Delwood Shopping Center just east of I-35 at 38th St. and the Twin Oaks Shopping Center on south Congress.

The layout of the shopping center has pretty much stayed the same over the years, and the vacancy rate has held more or less at 10%. Probably the biggest change to the Village was when H-E-B moved from where the Antique Marketplace is today to where White's appears in the photo. As far as Robert knows, H-E-B has always been the anchor tenant in Allandale Village. When he was a teenager, Robert had a job mowing the then-vacant lot behind the shopping center. North Austin State Bank later built a bank there and added a drive-thru. The bank later moved to the Northcross area when the mall was built back in the 1970s.

I asked Robert if could recall any stories about the tenants he's had while managing the property. He said that like any other business, there are ups and downs. Working with independent businesses as opposed to the national stores is always a little more of challenge. He recalls an incident with a bridal shop where the owner was taking money on orders for wedding dresses and putting it in his pocket. He was also not paying his rent. Robert started pressing him for rent in December of that year and eventually got a court order and padlocked the store. That was, unfortunately, in April. "We had a lot of

Continued on page 4

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Allandale Village, 1950's.

Robert Knight of Knight Real Estate

Allandale Village

continued from page 3

brides and their mothers demanding their dresses," he said. "Of course, there were a number of lawsuits, and the incident made the papers. It was difficult at the time but comical in hindsight."

A more recent example of the challenges of managing the Village was Dry Dock. The business owner wanted to open a sports bar, but he didn't tell Robert that was his intention. He said the business was going to be seafood restaurant and that he was going to apply for late night permit to serve liquor. He ended up not getting the permit because of neighborhood opposition. The restaurant lasted less than a year. He moved out in the middle of the night.

Texas Gold Stamps was one of the long-standing tenants at Allandale Village. It is shown in the 1954 photo of the shopping center. Robert says there used to be a library where the Antique Marketplace is now. He also recalls there was a cleaners on the southeast corner of the shopping center for a

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long time. Gem's Fabric and Sewing Center was there for a number of years as well, and shows up in the 1954 photo. According Barbara Frock, longtime Allandale resident, "On the corner was White's – sort of an everything store...hardware, some furniture, lawn things, etc. There was the Fashion Shop and then the small H-E-B."

I asked Robert if he anticipated any major changes or new tenants for the shopping center. The biggest potential change for the Allandale Village, he said, would be expansion of the H-E-B. He acknowledged that he is in discussions with H-E-B regarding an expansion that would extend the store over to Blockbuster, but is too early to discuss the details. Other than that, he anticipates the Washington Mutual Bank in Allandale Village will be closing at some point, given that it has filed for bankruptcy.

"We've always tried to have a good mix of tenants that included both national and local tenants." Robert told me. "We've turned down some national tenants to preserve that mix and keep it local." As he sees it, Allandale Village is a community center. With H-E-B as the anchor, people go there to take care of their daily needs. That is the way I see it, I am usually in the Allandale Village shopping center two or three times a week.

Allandale Village today.

Your memories and stories about Allandale Village are welcomed. We have included this story on the web site, www.allandalereporter.org. *Go there and enter your story in the comments section. It will become a part of our ongoing Allandale history project.* ❖

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H-E-B Responds – Expansion a Possibility

Tom Linehan

Leslie Lockett, Director of Public Affairs for the regional H-E-B office, returned my call Friday afternoon after two attempts to contact her earlier in the week. She said H-E-B is exploring its options with regard to expanding the Allandale store, but no decision has been made. "H-E-B will make a formal announcement when a decision has been made," she said. As for now, H-E-B is only in the exploration stage. She did confirm there is a serious interest in the expansion, but there are a number of considerations. It takes a while to get design work done and to determine project costs. Like everyone else, H-E-B is cautious about taking on any construction with the current state of the economy. H-E-B will also have to work through an agreement with the landlord to move forward on an expansion.

If H-E-B does expand the store at the Allandale Village, the focus would be to broaden its product offerings, give the store a face lift, and provide more room for shoppers. The store has been around since the early days of Allandale Village, which dates back to the late 1940s. H-E-B originally occupied the space where the Antique Marketplace is and moved into the current location in the 1970s. Judging from the traffic, it's a successful location. The current store is roughly 50,000 square feet. Leslie did not know the square footage that would be added if the store were expanded into the adjacent properties at the south end of the store. She did say it's very unlikely they would consider building up because there just isn't enough parking to support a two-story store.

The competition, she says, is one of the considerations in making the decision. Wal-Mart will be getting underway with construction of their Northcross store this spring, and Walgreen's has a "Now Hiring" sign up outside its soon-to-be-completed store across the street. Given that Kids-n-Kats and Jackson Hewitt are both relocating within the Center at the end of this month, my guess is a decision will come sooner rather than later. Leslie would only agree that a decision on an expansion would likely be made this year. ❖

Allandale Supports Minimum Open Space Requirement, Backs Candidate Forum

Steven Zettner

The Allandale Neighborhood Association Executive Committee on January 22 passed a motion calling on City Council to set minimum standards for pedestrian open space in mixed-use districts, and to define mechanisms for meeting those standards.

Allandale is also joining several other North Central Austin neighborhood associations to host a Candidate Forum, scheduled for April 13, that would focus attention on this and other growth issues affecting our part of the city. Other neighborhoods that have expressed interest in sponsoring the forum include Crestview, Highland, North Shoal Creek, and Wooten.

The election is scheduled for Saturday May 9.

This will be an exciting election season, with 4 of 7 seats competitive. A 5th seat, held by Council Member Mike Martinez, is likely to be uncontested. The outcome of the election will determine the City's direction on issues like development, traffic and transportation, parks and open space, affordable housing, sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and many other issues that have a direct impact on North Central Austin.

The Minimum Open Space Requirement is an outcome of the recent Vertical Mixed Use process that rezoned hundreds of acres for new housing on streets like Burnet and Anderson without requiring a minimum level of pedestrian open space. Neighborhoods are pressing to have this gap addressed so that the newly zoned mixed-use districts comply with expectations set by urban planning groups like The Congress for the New Urbanism. The Minimum Open Space Requirement was proposed by Sustainable Neighborhoods of North Central Austin (*SNAustin.org*). ❖

The outcome of the City Council election on May 9 will determine the City's direction on issues that have a direct impact on North Central Austin. Come meet the candidates and hear what they have to say about growth issues affecting your community.

City Council Candidate Forum
Monday, April 13, 2009, 6:30 p.m.
Wozniak Hall at St. Louis Church

Hosted by Allandale, Crestview, Highland, North Shoal Creek, and Wooten neighborhood associations.

The election for the Mayor and City Council Members to Places 2, 5 and 6, and a special municipal election to elect a City Council Member to fill the unexpired term of Place 1 will take place Saturday, May 9, 2009.

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Habitat Challenge – Our Prize, A Prize for Posterity

Cheryl Silver

Just a few short months ago, Allandale residents learned we were one of the winners of the city's Wildlife Habitat Challenge, and that our individual and our group efforts paid off with a second place win. Way to go, Allandale!

When I first learned of the challenge put to neighborhoods, my opinion was that the second prize was the best – a prize that would create a lasting legacy for our neighborhood. The prize is a whole bunch of trees to add to our own Allandale urban forest. The trees will include a diversity of beautiful and tough native species, such as Burr Oak, Live Oak, Cedar Elm, Redbud, Mexican Buckeye, Texas Mountain Laurel, Desert Willow, Bald Cypress, and (hopefully) a few Anacua trees.

After a request for suggestions as to where to plant the trees, the decision has been made to enhance the "forest" in Northwest Park. Neighborhood residents will be asked to help with the effort, but no one will be turned away, so you can round-up friends from elsewhere to pitch in.

The planting is scheduled for February 28th so mark your calendars!

Stay tuned for more updates on the project. ❖

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Crime In Allandale – 2008 Statistics

Tom Linehan

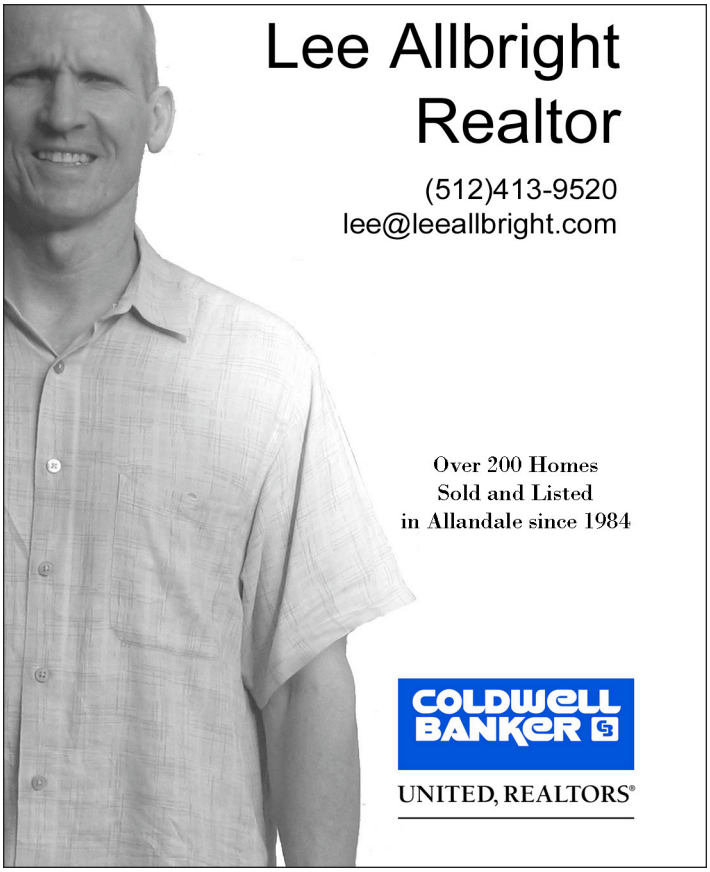
Crime in Allandale was down in 2008, but not by much. The best that can be said is it's not on the rise. To really understand what's going on with crime in the neighborhood, you need to dig into the details. This is simply a summary of the detail made available through the Austin Police Department's Crime Report Viewer.

The total number of crimes in Allandale in 2008 was 1,202, compared to 1,232 in 2007 and 1,258 in 2006. The table shows only the top 25 crimes reported in Allandale from 2005 to 2008. You can see that Theft is consistently at the top of the list. If you look at the detail, however, you'll see most of the thefts are from businesses along Burnet and Anderson. This is similar to what the statistics tell us about adjoining neighborhoods. Theft and Burglary of Vehicles are the top crimes. I have included a table that shows a comparison of reported crimes in Allandale, Brentwood, Crestview, North Shoal Creek, and Rosedale for 2008. The number of incidents for most of the crimes is higher in Allandale simply because Allandale is larger than the other neighborhoods, not because crime in our neighborhood is more prevalent.

TOP 25 CRIMES IN ALLANDALE BY YEAR
Date Range: 01/01/2005 – 12/31/08

CRIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	Change 2005-08
THEFT	150	137	125	151	1%
BURGLARY OF VEH	196	154	148	140	-40%
LEAVING THE SCENE CRASH/ACCIDE	15	78	88	65	77%
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	117	83	65	64	-83%
DWI	14	49	65	52	73%
BURGLARY NON RESIDENCE	29	43	45	45	36%
FAMILY DISTURBANCE	29	35	48	43	33%
HARASSMENT	16	43	40	43	63%
BURGLARY OF RESIDENCE	36	42	33	42	14%
DISTURBANCE/OTHER	8	14	21	41	80%
CRIMINAL TRESPASS	5	27	18	30	83%
SOLICITATION PROHIBIT CITY ORD			4	25	100%
SUSPICIOUS PERSON	5	15	16	23	78%
FOUND PROP	4	17	15	22	82%
LOST PROP	7	40	18	20	65%
PUBLIC INTOXICATION	7	20	23	18	61%
ASSAULT W/INJURY-FAM/DATE VIOL	20	22	22	16	-25%
GRAFFITI	3	7	16	13	77%
ABANDONED VEH	6	18	12	12	50%
WARR ARREST NON TRAFFIC	2	15	5	12	83%
ASSAULT BY CONTACT	11	11	8	10	-10%
ASSAULT WITH INJURY	13	7	14	10	-30%
AUTO THEFT	21	21	19	10	-110%
CRED CARD ABUSE/OTHER	1	8	10	10	90%
FRAUD/OTHER	2	4	19	10	80%
POSS OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA	7	4	8	10	30%
TOTAL CRIMES	887	1,258	1,232	1,202	

Source: Austin Police Department Crime Report Viewer



2008 CRIME

Neighborhood	Allandale	Brentwood	Crestview	North Shoal Creek	Rosedale
THEFT	151	110	45	79	56
BURGLARY OF VEH	140	92	61	113	52
LEAVING THE SCENE CRASH/ACCIDE	65	49	13	39	31
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	64	47	19	49	28
DWI	52	23	13	16	3
BURGLARY NON RESIDENCE	45	36	12	17	19
FAMILY DISTURBANCE	43	58	25	32	9
HARASSMENT	43	49	20	38	22
BURGLARY OF RESIDENCE	42	57	30	15	28
DISTURBANCE/OTHER	41	25	19	18	13
CRIMINAL TRESPASS	30	12	3	4	5
SOLICITATION PROHIBIT CITY ORD	25	1	1	3	1
SUSPICIOUS PERSON	23	16	9	6	12
FOUND PROP	22	16	3	9	6
LOST PROP	20	12	6	5	7
PUBLIC INTOXICATION	18	36	13	9	10
ASSAULT W/INJURY-FAM/DATE VIOL	16	31	18	16	5
GRAFFITI	13	19	2	13	7
ABANDONED VEH	12	30	12	6	4
WARR ARREST NON TRAFFIC	12	9	6	8	3
ASSAULT BY CONTACT	10	5	2	4	2
ASSAULT WITH INJURY	10	19	3	4	3
AUTO THEFT	10	20	14	5	6
CRED CARD ABUSE/OTHER	10	15	5	10	2
FRAUD/OTHER	10	7	4	10	3
POSS OF DRUG PARAPHERNALIA	10	7	3	4	2
CUSTODY ARREST TRAFFIC WARR	9	15	3	10	1
SUICIDE	9	5	1	4	3
Total Crimes in 2008	**1,202**	**1,086**	**477**	**728**	**427**

Map of Burglaries

I delved into the detail on Burglary of Residences for Allandale because for most people it ranks high on their list of worries. There were a total of 42 burglaries in 2008, up from 33 in 2007. There is no single month where the number of crimes is particularly high. The map is color-coded on the web site: *www.allandalereporter.org*, to illustrate which months the burglaries were reported. Burglaries are spread out more or less evenly across the year. The web version is clickable to enable you to see the blocks and block numbers of the location where these burglaries took place. For 2008, it shows there was a higher incidence of burglaries south of Hancock.

Just a reminder that in the past year, Allandale has put together a solid block captain structure under the coordination and efforts of Laura DiCarlo. To learn more about becoming a block captain, contact Laura at 323-6929 or e-mail her at *lhdicarlo@yahoo.com*. ❖

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Securing Doors against Kick-In Attacks

Keith Savage

Last issue, we covered the importance of buying high quality dead bolts that are resistant to the new burglary technique known as "lock bumping." This issue, I will discuss a more fundamental issue of residential security: preventing kick-in door attacks. The reality is that the majority of residential front doors can be quickly and easily broken into with a swift kick from a stout boot. This very same attack was performed on my neighbor's front door last month.

Here are the common door weaknesses:

1) Dead bolt strike plate is not anchored into the structural framing surrounding your door, typically referred to as the door studs. Most door frames are made of pine or spruce – weak softwoods that will easily crack under directed force.

2) Door strike plate is undersized

3) Door hinges are not anchored into the door studs. Door has only 2 hinges.

4) For wood doors, the hole in the door where dead bolt is installed is not reinforced with a metal wrap- around guard.

5) Window glass within reaching distance of the dead bolt.

Here is how you can mitigate the above door weaknesses:

1) Replace all short dead bolt strike plate screws with 3" minimum length screws that will penetrate solidly into the door stud.

2) Small strike plates should be replaced with larger, beefier versions. The bigger the strike plate, the better it will spread impact force over a larger area. The best strike plates are called box strikes, meaning that there is a small metal box incorporated into the strike plate that receives the dead bolt. Medeco dead bolts all include this type of strike plate.

3) Replace 1 screw from each hinge with a 3" minimum length screw that will penetrate solidly into to the door stud. If your door only has 2 hinges, then add a 3rd hinge in the middle.

4) Install a metal wraparound door reinforcer to your dead bolt. This is book-shaped piece of sheet metal that strengthens the door edge immediately adjacent to the dead bolt. The company Don-Jo Mfg sells a complete line of them. They are available at Lowe's, Home Depot, or any locksmith store.

5) Your door is only as strong as the weakest link, which is often a window. An efficient burglar will apply duct tape to the window, tap it with a hammer, and then remove the shattered glass all in one tidy piece. Then they

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can simply reach around and unlock the door.

First off, avoid buying a door with non-laminated glass within reaching distance of the dead bolt. Next, consider a dead bolt keyed on both sides. Leave a key hanging on a peg nearby, but out of reach of the window. Also, consider reinforcing the window with security film. This is applied like window tint. 3M sells high strength window security film.

Bonus Tip: When installing a new door, take time to reinforce the door stud on the lock side with an inexpensive piece of 4' x 3" x 1/16" steel. Using construction glue and screws, fasten the metal plate to the stud. This will make your door framing resistant to even the strongest kick-in attacks.

By applying the above techniques to your exterior doors, you will greatly reduce the risk of failing victim to a kick-in door attack. Typically, if a door doesn't yield in 2 or 3 kick attempts, a thief will abort the break-in and go seek an easier target. Good luck, and stay secure! ❖

It's My Park Day – March 7th

Linnea Lemon

It's My Park Day will be March 7th, 2009. Allandale was one of the first neighborhoods to participate in It's My Park Day, and the tradition continues this year. Allandale will continue the tradition of working in and around the pond in Northwest Park

Join your neighbors to clean up around the Northwest Park pond. Volunteers will remove trash and debris, skim algae, clear vines and plants from along the cliff side, clear cattails, and help paint railings. Everyone is welcome. Great for Groups! All ages welcome. Wear Sturdy shoes and remember the terrain is uneven. Waterproof boots and bug repellent are recommended, but not required. Difficulty: Easy. Sign up online at *http://www.austinparks.org/* and meet in the parking lot by the playscape.

Group Supervisor:

We need volunteers to act as group supervisors on the day of the event. Supervisors work with small teams to complete a set of tasks. They make sure the team is signed in and hand out T-shirts and tools. Supervisors do need to be at least 18 years old, and available on March 7th from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. They do not need to trim brush, pick up trash, etc.

If you can help as a site supervisor, please contact Linnea at 750-8902. ❖

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These Folks Work For You! *The Newsletter Committee at Russell's Bakery, as they prepare for the February issue. From left, Allan McMurtrey, Tom Linehan, Nathan Dooley, Jen Welch and Cathy Savage.*

What You Get for $15 a Year

Mary Jean Matus

The Allandale Neighborhood Association needs your membership. Please support us by renewing or become a new member.

Did you know?

In 2008 the Allandale Neighborhood Association worked on

- VMU. Vertical Mixed Used development and how it will impact Allandale.
- Safety Watch/Block captains – Installed over 30 neighborhood watch signs for our protection
- 4th of July Parade, and Sarah Pierce Concert in the Park for our enjoyment
- ANA Newsletter - communicates neighborhood news and important issues
- Flooding along White Rock
- Northcross. Interacts with the city and continues to monitor Northcross development
- Beautification – ANA organized three clean-up days in 2008 and placed 2nd in the City's Wildlife Habitat Challenge

If you enjoy these benefits then pay us back with your support and membership.

$15 per year $7.50 Senior

Complete and mail in the membership form on the back of this newsletter or go to the web site: *www.allandalereporter.org* and join/renew online. It lets these volunteers, your neighbors, know that their efforts are appreciated. ❖

Mobility and Life in Allandale

Allan McMurtry

Mobility in America has always been an interesting phenomenon. In Europe, it is not unusual to find families that can trace occupancy in their homes back 3 to 5 generations. The idea of moving is either not appealing, not affordable, or not worthy of the thought. Americans have been different. As little as 30 years ago, the average family would move about once every 5 years: to chase a job, a dream, or a dream house.

But times are changing. The monthly Current Population survey found that less than 12% of Americans moved over the last 1 year, and that number is declining. Reasons for this include an aging population and the advent of two-career families. It is one thing for the single career family to chase a better job, but when two people have good jobs, it is harder for either to move.

Maybe we're becoming more homebodies. In a recent Pew Research survey, 37% of Americans lived in the towns where they were born, while 63% had changed communities at least once.

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When looking at the states where the highest percentage of people who were born there still lived there, Texas ranked 1st at 76%, followed by North Carolina, Georgia, California, and Wisconsin. The most mobile states were Alaska at 28% of those born there still living there, followed by Wyoming, South and North Dakota, and Montana.

Those who stay listed family ties as the main reason, while those that moved listed a better job as the reason. Amid these statistics, a survey of 2260 homes found that 23% said their current home was not where their heart is. Of those who said that home was somewhere else, 50% said they would stay where they are, while 40% said they would like to move back.

Correlating home ownership to the desire to move is more problematical in this current economic climate. However, we did a review of homeownership in Allandale using the Travis County Appraisal District records, and, based on a limited survey of 151 homes in 3 locations (far north, central, and far south Allandale) the survey revealed the following on three randomly-chosen streets:

Overall owner occupancy	82%	
		Highest home value
Far north	89%	$406,000
Central	92%	$636,000
Far south	66%	$678,000

Across the United States, the statistics vary. The highest homeowner occupancy by state is Michigan at 77.4%, while the lowest is New York at 54.9%. Texas is at 66.6%. As far as Texas cities go, Austin/Round Rock is at 66.3%, Dallas is 61.8%, Houston is 63.2% and San Antonio is 67.3%. These are Census Bureau estimates, so expect some variation.

The Allandale portion is a small survey, so a tight accuracy is suspect. However, it gives you a small view into the statistical character of the neighborhood. The real value is what you perceive it to be. ❖

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Allandale Neighborhood Association Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for November and December

Mary Jean Matus

25 November 2008

The regular monthly Executive Committee (EC) meeting of the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) was held on Tuesday, November 25, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at Covenant Presbyterian, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being absent.

Members Present:
Allan McMurtry, President; Joe Reynolds, Treasurer; Donna Beth McCormick; Paulette Kern; Cynthia Keohane; Peggy Maceo.

Financial report given by Joe Reynolds.

Committee Reports and updates given:

- Bylaws
- VMU

A motion was made by Joe Reynolds, seconded by Paulette Kern, that "The ANA EC authorizes the VMU Committee to negotiate a cash amount between $1000 and $2500 in place of the bond performance required by the RC agreement for 6400 Burnet Road." This is an accommodation to MSI in recognition of the difficulties of getting the originally required bond. The motion passed unanimously.

- Northcross
- Beautification
- Membership
- Austin Neighborhood Council update (Cynthia Keohane).
- Sustainable Neighborhoods update.
- Old Business
- New Business
- ANA's Spring Picnic in the Park scheduled for 29 March 2009

The meeting was adjourned.

11 December 2008

The regular monthly Executive Committee (EC) meeting of the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) was held on Thursday, December 11, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of EC Board member Allan McMurtry, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

Members Present:
Allan McMurtry, President; Mary Jean Matus, Secretary; Joe Reynolds, Treasurer; Donna Beth McCormick; Paulette Kern; George Roman; Cynthia Keohane; Dustin Little, Peggy Maceo.

Financial report given by Joe Reynolds.

Current Balance:	$18,820.57
Business:	$2,859.20
Nonprofit Business:	$9,430.54
Savings:	$6,530.83

Board members had open discussion with the regard to the following:

- Membership drive
- Open space issues

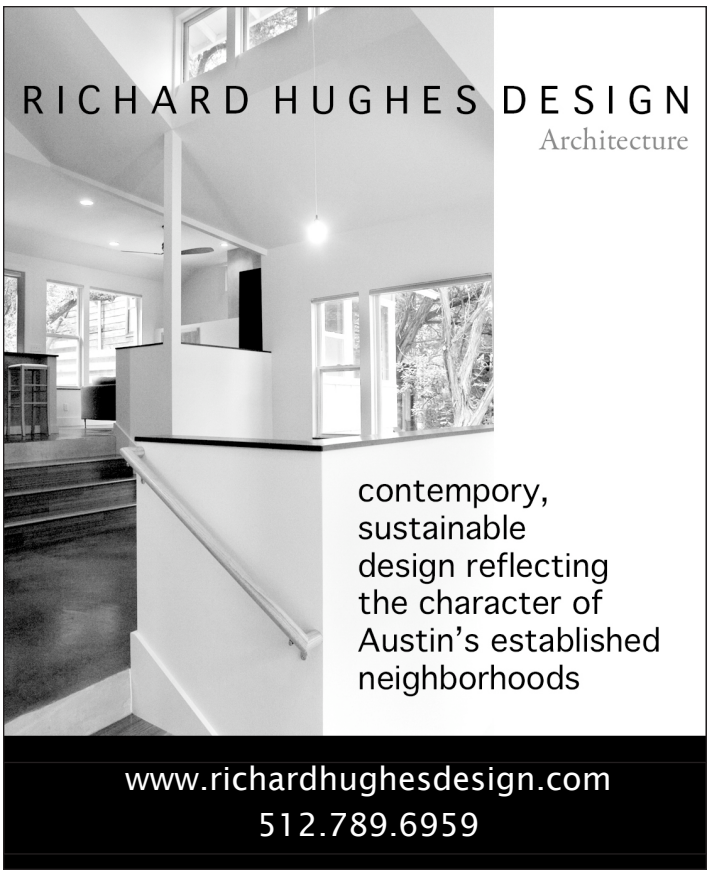
Steven Zettner gave an overview of the mission and goals of Sustainable Neighborhoods of North Central Austin in lobbying the City of Austin to include minimum functional open spaces within the Vertical Mixed Use ordinance; i.e., spaces that are both pedestrian friendly and functional. Steven requested a resolution of support from the ANA EC. The resolution of support will be circulated to EC members, to be voted on at next EC meeting in January.

- Update of ANA committees/members
- ANA and its relationship with area business

There were no motions and no votes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. ❖

Get to know your neighbors– organize a block party!



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Updates from the Zoning/Land Use Committee

Paulette Kern

Lincoln Properties has applied for a resubdivision of Northcross Mall. The process will resubdivide 1 lot into 4 lots. It is unknown what the purpose of this process is. Should an entity want to buy a portion of the as-yet undivided lot, they could not. Once resubdivided, each of the 4 lots could be sold. Maybe this would allow Wal-Mart to buy the property on which the store will be built.

Other lots are up for resubdivision. One is at the corner of Nasco and Allandale, on the SE corner of that intersection.

Construction on the lot at Burnet and Lawnmont has begun. For a rough idea of what that facility will look like, check out the apartments on the 4400 block of Bull Creek. This Lawnmont/Burnet property is an example of the much-touted Vertical Mixed Use. ❖

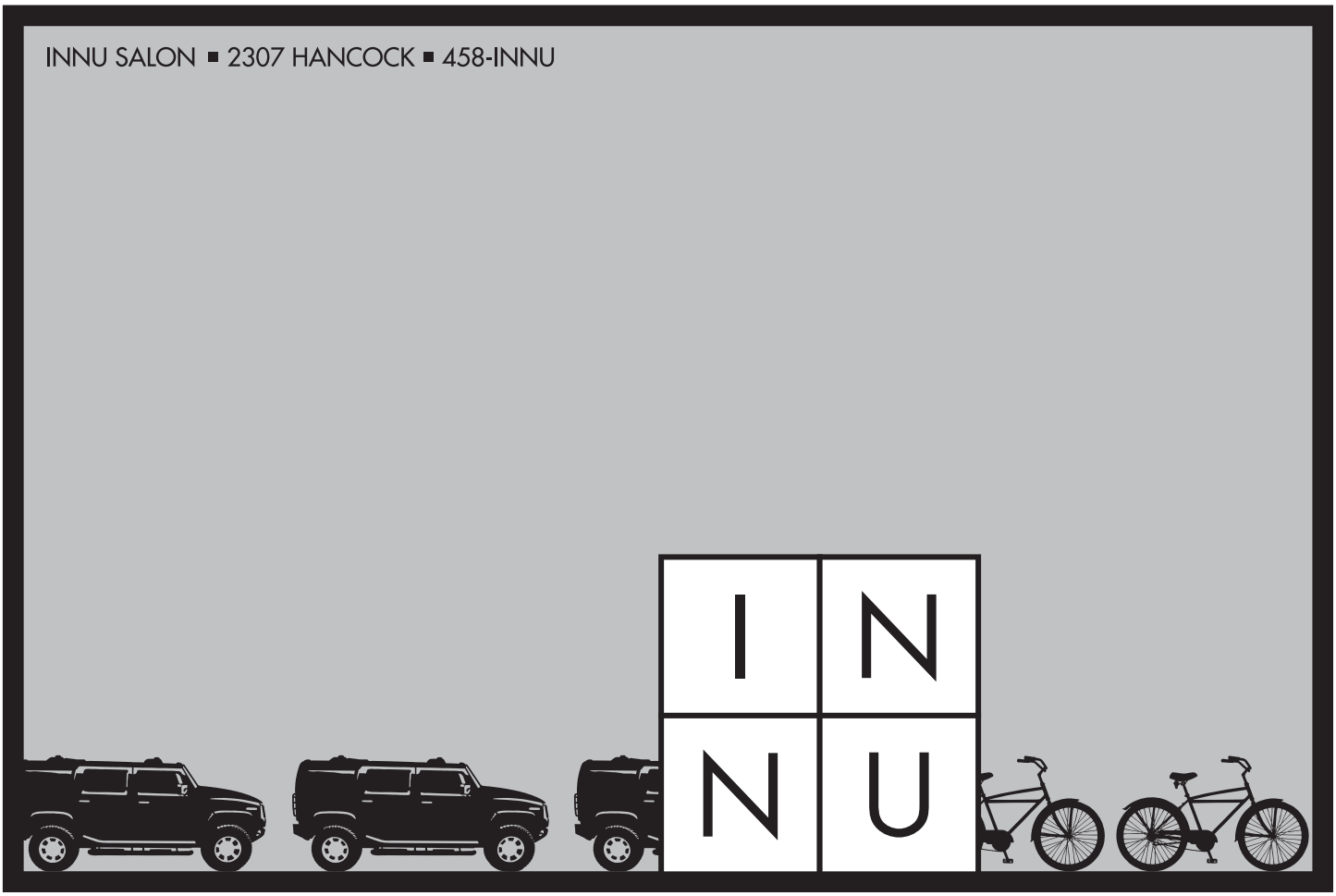
Tree Planting Allandale and Crestview volunteers gathering at the Post Office

Tree Planting Success

Linnea Lemon

The January 9 tree planting along Northcross Drive and St. Joseph was a combined effort by Crestview and Allandale neighbors. Neighbor Paul Smith inspired this planting of 9 native species specifically selected for the medians. Fifty volunteers planted trees provided by TreeFolks, and Emily King, Forester with the City of Austin, designed the plantings.

Linnea offers encouraging words to Laura DiCarlo.



Tree Planting Tree Folks instructing the Crestview and Allandale neighbors on the correct planting methods

COA Forester Emily King said: "This was one of the most successful tree plantings that I have attended!" ❖

Allandale Beautification Events Schedule

2/21/09	9 a.m. - noon	Grounds Day at Gullett
2/28/09	9 a.m. - noon	Tree Planting in Northwest Park
3/7/09	9 a.m. - noon	It's My Park Day – Northwest Pond Clean up
4/4/09	9 a.m. - noon	Austin Clean Sweep with the Gullet GLO Club ❖

Dog Talk: What We Each Know

Cheryl Silver

I am prompted this month to share some thoughts that I hope will save each of you from avoidable sadness and disappointment. Because I am not writing to a specific person I hope no one takes offense but instead uses this information constructively. The gist of the message is: Be smart about bringing a dog into your life. There is help out there; use it!

Just as you would – I hope – get tips from trusted neighbors on who to contact for work on the foundation of your house or work on your car, there is help out there to help you get the right dog for your family. There are more pitfalls out there than you can shake a stick at, and most people are unaware of the avoidable problems they may encounter. I have just mentioned a few below.

Those of you who already have dogs who are struggling with knee problems or hip dysplasia could possibly have avoided these issues by dealing with a responsible breeder who does the health testing on any dogs they would even consider for breeding. Some of you may have dogs of breeds with cardiac issues, such as Cavaliers, or dogs that are going blind due to congenital conditions. Go to *www.offa.org*. This non-profit organization is dedicated to the enhancement of canine health. Check out the diseases they test for and read about their databases. The typical neighbor who just produces a litter of pups never does any testing to avoid these problems.

Health issues are just one piece of the puzzle. Behavioral and temperament issues are the reason most dogs lose their homes. Obtaining a dog from a place like Craigslist or placing a dog through Craigslist is, in my opinion, a huge risk. Often, the people surrendering the dog will lack the expertise to help you understand the issues with their specific dog's behavior, and the family searching for a dog this way is likely to run into more challenges than they ever imagined. Many dogs placed this way end up being bounced from place to place and end up in a shelter, where the trauma of the bouncing affects them to the extent that they are not deemed adoptable.

Many of you work in a special field where you know the ins and outs of the field, and you could tell us stories that would help us avoid awful pitfalls. I am so grateful when you share your expertise. Let me share a short story.

Continued on page 20

WHAT ARE YOU MISSING?

Recent Postings on the ANA Newsgroup:

electric range needed
termite advice
plumber recommendations
wallpaper installer needed
housekeeper

To see them all, go to www.groups.yahoo.com/group/allandale/messages. Not a member? Join the over 700 of your neighbors who already are at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/allandale/

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Dog Talk

Continued from page 19

Many people have contacted me recently about a young Airedale terrier being sold on Craigslist. They want me to rescue this boy; they can see the sadness in his expression. Because of the rescue work I do, I know that this dog is the product of someone who does mass production of dogs and other animals not far from Austin. I know how to search out this man's operation and, as I write this, he has 5 pages of ads for various animals and various breeds of dogs. The birth dates show that many, many litters are born, and there is no way a person could tend to and socialize all of these animals. There are little clues in the advertisement for this Airedale that scream out to me – "bad situation." If, however, you talked to this person on the telephone, you would likely be quite impressed. If you purchased this dog, I suspect your heart would be broken unless you like taking on what rescuers sometimes call a "project dog." Other rescuers in the southwest USA know dogs from this operation because we see them in rescue; unsocialized dogs, often fearful. Hopefully, people will stop buying dogs from this operation and the economic downturn will discourage this activity completely.

Perhaps you can tell that my heart aches for the dogs and the families that find themselves tangled in these bad situations. All I can do is offer my assistance to help guide you to a satisfying and beneficial relationship with a dog in your life. Let's collaborate to find a dog that will fit into your life now and down the road; let's be smart. It is my pleasure and honor to help you with this. Thanks for listening. *csilver2@austin.rr.com,* 512/454-7219 ❖

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Gullett Good News Column

Stephanie Schulz

As February kicked off, the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) fund-raising drive was at its halfway mark. The two-week event ended February 6th. Results from the city-wide contest showing which school raised the most money for RIF, the oldest and largest children's and family nonprofit literacy organization in the United States, will be revealed later this school year.

Valentine parties were held throughout the school on February 12, the Thursday before Valentines Day. Each class celebrated with cards, treats, and art activities.

On February 18, school administrators invite incoming students and their parents to take a look at the school. The day marks the third in a series of days that the staff formally invites new families to check out the school. Of course, those interested in learning about the school are invited at any time. Simply stop by the office and sign in. (Remember, Gullett is a testing site for the new Austin schools identification system. All visitors must show their ID.)

After a fairly calm February, March will come in a like a lion – a very active lion – for the Geckos The school kicks off the month with TAKS tests for the third, fourth, and fifth graders.

To de-stress from the tests, the students are invited to enjoy a movie night on March 7. The Silent Auction, an annual fund-raiser for the school, will be paired with a movie in an effort to attract more parents. In the new set-up, parents have childcare provided right at the school. The silent auction will feature donations from area businesses, as well as baskets created by the classrooms. The funds raised at the event go to the PTA to improve the school.

The always-popular Sports Day is scheduled for Friday, March 13. Featuring relay races, jump roping, and a concession stand, the students will face off in a friendly and competitive environment led by Phys-Ed Teacher Patti Brausse.

The students can look forward to total relaxation after Sports Day, which marks the last day of classes before Spring Break. The students, staff, and teachers are off March 17 - 21, with classes resuming on March 23.

Back at school, students will be expected to eat right during Eat Bright Week, which begins March 30. Every day, students are asked to eat a fresh fruit or vegetables in their lunch. At the end of the day, they are rewarded with a special Eat Bright Week prize.

On March 31, first and second graders will have a rhythm performance for parents. The show starts at 6:30 p.m. Students will practice in front of the entire school on March 30. Break a leg, first and second graders!

Students will be off on April 10, and the televisions, hopefully, will be off the week of April 20 - 27 during "no screen week."

To get the most current information about what's happening at Gullett, visit our website at *gullettgeckos.com*. The site features many pages about the classes and teachers, various clubs and organizations, and lots of information that parents need to know. Also, many of our teachers have their own blogs with information specific to their classrooms. ❖

Drain Flies

Wizzie Brown

Small flies in the home can become quite a nuisance. One type of fly that may infest the home is a drain fly. Drain flies are small, have two wings, and are a brownish or grayish color. Drain flies have a fuzzy appearance and, when at rest, the wings are held roof-like over the body making them look like tiny moths, which is why they are also sometimes called moth flies.

Drain flies are often seen in kitchens and bathrooms near sinks and tubs. They tend to be more active in the evening. Female flies lay eggs in the thin film of organic matter that builds up on the inside of pipes. The larvae develop in the slime layer, feeding on fungi and other microorganisms.

Killing adult drain flies will only temporarily solve your problem. To manage drain flies, the source should be treated to reduce the population of developing flies. To track down the source, place tape over one side (don't cover the drain completely) of the drains in sinks and tubs before you go to bed. In the morning, check the tape for flies that emerged during the night to find out which drain is infested.

Once you locate the drain, take a stiff brush to physically clean out the drain and the flush the drain with boiling water. There is no need to treat the drain with bleach or ammonia. It may take several days to see a reduction of the adult flies once the drain has been cleaned; you have to allow the emerged adults to die off.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512/854-9600. Also check out *www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com.* ❖

Constable's Notebook

Constable Bruce Elfant

I remember when a candidate for governor slammed a jail door shut to emphasize his position that Texas needed to get tough on crime. In 1984, when Mark White pledged to increase sentences and build more prisons, the Texas penal system housed about 39,000 inmates at a cost of just under $800 million per year. The crime rate was 6,030 crimes per 100,000 residents. Today the crime rate, lead by a significant drop in the murder rate, has dropped to about 4,631 crimes per 100,000 people, but Texas prisons now house about four times the number of inmates at a cost of nearly $3 billion per year. Increasing penalties for drug offenses, "Three strikes and you are out" statutes, and increased minimum sentences are significant factors that contributed to the sharply increased incarceration rates during a period of reduced crime.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, about half of the inmate population in state prisons is comprised of violent offenders, 20% property, 20% substance abuse and 8% minor public order crimes. Sixty percent of inmates have not completed a high school education. Nearly 20% suffer from mental illness and it is estimated that upwards of 40% are infected with Hepatitis C. The elderly inmate population that has increased by more than 33% over the last decade represents the fastest growing segment of the inmate population. It is estimated that 2/3 of released inmates will be re-arrested within three years of their release. That comes as no surprise, given the number of inmates with substance abuse issues who receive no treatment in prison, the difficulties of finding employment without a high school education and with a criminal record, the societal challenges

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of mentally ill inmates, and those who actually become more hardened criminals while in prison.

Last session, lawmakers began to ask whether the "get tough on crime" policy that had been in place for decades was the smartest approach to reducing the crime rate and the associated costs of the criminal justice system. Are sentences appropriate? Is incarceration the best approach for all offenders? Does it make sense to continue to incarcerate inmates who are in their 70s, 80s, and even 90s and incur the health care costs that are double the costs for younger inmates? Is enough being done to reduce the recidivism rate?

Why is it that Texas runs one of the world's largest prison systems but continues to experience one of the world's highest crime rates?

Travis County officials have long believed that finding alternatives to incarceration for certain non-violent offenders, making drug treatment and GED programs more available, treating rather than simply housing offenders with mental illnesses, and preparing the 99% of inmates who will ultimately re-enter society are far more effective strategies to reduce crime rates than the simply "lock 'em up and throw away the key" mentality that has long been state policy. It has been said that the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. Almost every other nation and most states locks up fewer offenders, enjoys lower crime rates, and pay less for their criminal justice systems than Texans do. Our state leaders should work this session to achieve a different result to make Texas a safer place to live. ❖

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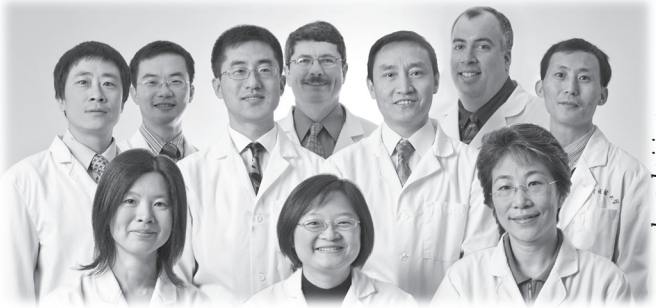

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Back row: Xiaotian Shen, LAc 497; Song Luo, PhD, LAc 950; Yongxin Fan, LAc 663; William Morris, LAc 1009; Jamie Wu, LAc 320; Robert Laguna, LAc 352; Yuxing Liu, PhD, LAc 758. Front Row: Yuxia Qiu, LAc 568; Zheng Zeng, LAc 678; Zhongling Zhang, LAc 441. Not pictured: Yan Wu, LAc 443

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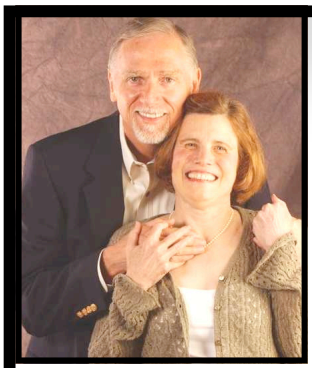
Which Committee would you like to join?

❑ Beautification ❑ Membership ❑ Planning
❑ Bylaw ❑ Fund-raising ❑ Zoning
❑ Communications ❑ Nominating ❑ Other
❑ Events



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